1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

vessel covered with a tarp. If goods must be unloaded from a boat before reaching the final destination of a journey, they are stored on the shore and, if rain is expected, placed on poles and covered with a tarp. In contrast to the absence of farewells, greetings are warm. People meeting in Lower Post after a winter's absence in the bush always shake hands with expressions of pleasure.

Indians are usually enthusiastic about travel. The same anticipation and pleasure marks a family's return to Lower Post in the spring which characterizes their start home in the fall. Hunting trips, when the decision has been made to start, are always undertaken with exuberant optimism and enjoyment. Less eagerness marks the start of a trap line tour. There is a commonly expressed attitude of disdain for "sitting one place all the time like white man." Any prolonged camping in one spot quickly becomes tiresome and dull. This ennui is manifested in several ways. People complain of how much it is costing them to live in town; a man remembers that soon the bull moose will begin to run and lose his fat, hence the time to get meat is running short; somebody else expresses pity for the "starving" dogs who need fish and meat. Often the decision to move is made with little warning. One day may be spent finishing new dog packs or belatedly buying supplies, and the next morning the eager barking of the dogs gives notice that the family is off.

Despite the frequency of travel, families seldom move solely for pleasure and rarely go beyond the limits of the tribal district except to visit the trading post. A man's youth is ideally a time for wider travel but such longer journeys never succeed in permanently luring a man from the Kaska area. As Nitla explained it, people in a strange place are apt to become lonesome for their country and this homesickness takes considerable time to wear off. Before it has had a chance to disappear, the youth has started back to his people.

FOOD, DRINK, AND INDULGENCE

Few Indians, except possibly some members of the Frances Lake tribe, any longer strive to maintain themselves primarily on game and fish. Although meat and fish are of both gustatory and economic importance, they are not in themselves depended on for subsistence, survival being closely bound up with the foodstuffs supplied by white traders. In winter when the Indians are far from the trading post and heavily dependent on the goods which were transported in the fall, an adequate supply of food is an indispensable guarantee against hunger anxiety. Food also has capital value. A sufficient stock of accumulated foodstuffs means that, once the trapping season opens, time and effort can be concentrated in the business of getting skins rather than diffused between hunting and trapping. Hunting is ideally to be pursued in autumn, not only because at that time game is fat from rich summer living, but because then time is available for this activity and the meat obtained will allow purchased provisions to stretch through the winter. Fishing in late summer and fall is of similar economic importance. These reasons explain in part the strong emotion which Indians invest in a supply of things to eat. They also help to demonstrate why the value of food in Kaska society is comparable to that of money in our own.

The Kaska refer to two kinds of food, meat and "grub." Meat categorically includes fish and any game animals or fowl killed for eating. Grub designates any food purchased from the traders, including flour, rice, canned meat, and fruit. Each family is expected to supply

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

its own grub and this principle is rigidly adhered to in summer, when the people live in Lower Post within easy contact of the stores. In winter, however, shortages of grub frequently arise and a family often has to be assisted until it has accumulated sufficient fur to undertake a journey to the trading post to restock depleted supplies.

Periods of hunger often occur among the Kaska. There are several reasons why this happens. A man sometimes errs in estimating his winter outfit. Often a minimal supply of grub must be shared with more unfortunate relatives. A man may also lack the money or credit to buy sufficient food. When any one or a combination of these conditions occur, and the family cannot kill sufficient meat to take the place of grub, acute and serious food shortage results. Hunger is never pleasant to the Indian, yet the average man and women is able to accept temporary periods of food shortage without manifest alarm and overtly tends to minimize such experiences. Despite the anxiety concerning food, most people do not carefully ration their winter outfits. As a result, shortages are discovered only when the supply of a particular commodity is already almost exhausted.

A period of hunger was reported to have occurred in Old Man's settlement during the winter of 1939-40. All the grub had been eaten and there was no meat. Included in the several families living in this settlement at the time were Old Wiley, his wife, and children; they had not purchased a winter outfit. "They always had no grub. Old Wiley never trap," Old Man explained. "Girls, gee they tough; they strong. They didn't feel no hungry. They sing around, cut wood." After four days with scarcely any food, Old Man's son-in-law, Harry Lang, killed a dozen chickens, and then Old Man brought down nine more fowl. Everybody ate chicken. The following day Harry left again to hunt moose. He killed one moose but lost another. "I got one marten," Old Man related. "I got seven skin that time." He took the marten and traveled to a white man's home twenty miles upriver. This white trapper gave Old Man "nearly two hundred pound grub for one marten. Here it is, we come back with load of grub. Here it is, they all left. They went to Excited Lake. We got to Excited Lake. Everybody hungry." The people had already consumed the whole of Harry's moose. "We come in with grub. I think it last about three days." In March, Harry took Old Man's skins to Lower Post from where he returned with a sledful of grub.

Associated with the familiarity of hunger is the fact that people are always ready to accept food. A gift of food is recognized as one of the most important presents. In children the desire for food shows itself starkly, being as yet unmodified by socially patterned inhibitions on emotional expression. Young boys entering the ethnographer's home and seeing his children eating stared avidly and sometimes snatched at leftovers which were abandoned on the plates.

For most of the Indians the ideal diet consists of a balance between meat and grub. These need not necessarily appear together at every meal but some meat in the course of a day is regarded as indispensable. Either a diet of straight meat without grub or straight grub without meat is regarded as unfortunate. Not only is a straight grub diet less appetizing, but people are aware that reliance on such food causes staples to diminish rapidly and therefore increases the danger of running short. Living on straight grub also involves a greater expense; meat is free, but grub must be purchased at relatively high prices. Only one or two old women, like Mrs. Man, are content with a straight meat diet accompanied by little more

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

262 than tea and sugar. The strength of this woman's emotional dependence on meat is indicated by the fact that, in September 1945, she expressed the conviction that she would die if meat did not soon arrive in camp. She refused to eat bannock, beans, or potatoes. "What you're gonna live on?" Old Man asked. "I drink tea," she replied stolidly. Old Man and his sons-in-law, however, all complained that they felt poorly when forced to eat straight meat.[11]

Meat itself is ranked in order of preference. Highly preferred is moose, caribou, sheep, and porcupine meat. Fat is greatly relished and all meat is improved if it contains fat. From October, when the moose begins to run, and throughout the winter, bulls are tough and their meat contains little fat. They then are regarded as "no good eating," in comparison to the cow, which is rich and succulent with fat. During most of the fall and winter, rabbits are staple food, occasionally supplanted by chicken. Too long a diet of any meat [226] becomes displeasing and creates a desire for fish. Little or no fishing, however, is done in winter.

Certain meats are not eaten, including squirrel, wolverine, fisher, fox, weasel, and wolf. Some people also avoid eating marten and lynx. Rabbits are rejected if they are unusually thin, or if a "white stuff" is found in the lungs. Many people refuse beaver fat, claiming it is too strong and "works on the stomach like epsom salts." A moose killed by wolves is likewise not eaten.

In winter, staples, apart from meat, include beans, macaroni, white flour, sugar, dry whole milk, tea, coffee, rice, oatmeal, lard, baking powder, yeast, and dry fruit (mainly apples and raisins). Soon exhausted are such luxury items in the winter outfit as cocoa, bacon, butter, potatoes, cheese, canned sardines, dry salmon, cornflakes, sweet crackers, jam, dry eggs, onions, and sugar syrup or honey. Meat is generally eaten with rice, macaroni, beans, or, when available, potatoes. Bannock generally follows the main course. When possible this bread is spread with butter, jam, or cold bacon grease. Cooked dry fruit is also frequently eaten for desert, but most of this product is reserved for making wine. Oatmeal is prepared for breakfast, as are cornflakes, and hot cakes.

In summer fresh meat occupies a more limited place in the diet, being replaced by canned meat, bacon, dried salmon, and salmon bellies. The latter two fish foods are imported from Telegraph Creek, where they are said to be put up by Chinese merchants. In this season, fresh eggs are commonly eaten, canned milk supplants powdered milk, and canned fruit takes the place of dry fruit. A very few fresh vegetables are received from white gardeners in the fall or may be harvested from native gardens. Berries, oranges, apples, tomato juice, canned vegetables, and cheese have important places in the summer diet. Bannock continues to be made but the people also purchase pies, doughnuts, sweet and soda crackers, and pilot bread biscuits.

262 146 In general, particularly when meat is short, the winter diet is poor and nutritionally

[11] There is evidence for believing that if the organism is used to a mixed diet of proteins and carbohydrates and is then subjected to a straight meat or protein diet, a painful readjustment is required. Similarly a readjustment from a protein to a mixed diet also takes time and too sudden a switch is said to produce cramps and illness. White hunters in the North have developed a system for making the transition from a straight meat to a mixed diet. Phillips, Unpublished Manuscript (1944).

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

inadequate. A generously estimated intake of 1850 calories a day is insufficient for work which requires from 2500 to 3000 calories for both sexes. Vitamin C is almost completely lacking; the amount of vitamin D received in the diet is low and can hardly be supplemented by the weak winter sunlight. Such minerals as calcium, iron, and copper are also poorly represented. So long as a mixed diet can be maintained, a proper balance of carbohydrates and proteins is assured, but in winter, personal experience revealed the intake of fats to be too low. As a result, considerable sugar is craved and eaten. In summer the diet is more nutritional and the only deficiency seems to be in vitamin D, but this can then be supplemented by sunlight. It may also be pointed out that the early months of living in the bush are associated with a somewhat better balanced diet than the later months, when most of the luxury items have been exhausted.

Moose and caribou meat are the principal preserved foods. A few fish are sometimes dried in the fall but seldom last more than a few weeks. Berries may be preserved by boiling and storing in unsealed glass jars, but they do not last until winter. A few families were reported to mash up dried low bush cranberries with bear grease in the fall for winter consumption.

In summer and early fall, when fresh meat is in danger of rapid spoilage, it is preserved by drying. The meat is boned and cut into a single slice, about a half-inch thick and from eighteen to thirty inches long. These slices are hung over a pole, which is supported between two forked sticks, and exposed to the sun. Underneath the meat a small smudge fire is built to keep away the flies. The meat dries in a day or two and is then removed to the house or cache, where it may be hung or stored in empty flour sacks until eaten. A few rabbits are sometimes also dried in this way, the skin and viscera being removed and the animal hung up by the hind legs until dry. In later fall, when flies have disappeared, larger pieces of meat are hung outside the cabin without a fire and left to dry or freeze. If game is killed in winter, only sufficient meat for a few days is brought into camp, the rest of the animal being left in the bush on a platform cache. People return to such a "meat place" when more meat is needed. Food preservation is the work of women.

In order of frequency, meat is prepared by boiling, frying, and broiling. Staples, such as dry fruit, potatoes, rice, and oatmeal, as well as the fins and heads of trout, are always boiled. The water is not poured off these foods but eaten. In camps as well as in the winter settlements where there are stoves, meat and fish are both fried or boiled. Porcupine is generally roasted but is also boiled. When porcupine has been cleaned of hair and gutted, with the kidneys left in place, it is split lengthwise on either side of the backbone. The quarters are sawed off and the backbone is cut into three sections. The meat is skinned after it has cooked or roasted. Moose tongue, rabbit and beaver meat are also usually boiled.[11] The heads of the moose, caribou, and porcupine are always roasted before an open fire and are regarded as delicacies. Moose bones are split and the marrow used in the preparation of soup. At a moose kill young people often throw the lower leg bones into a fire to cook the marrow, which is then scraped out of the split bone and eaten. When broiling meat, a portion of the kidney or colon fat is often simultaneously roasted and portions of meat and

[11] The same information has been reported for the Mackenzie River Indians. Phillips, Unpublished Manuscript (1944).

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

fat eaten successively. Some people smear cold lard on lean fried meat in order to improve the flavor. The large colon of the moose is cut open, scraped, washed, and then fried in lard. If lynx is eaten, it is generally boiled with a change of water. Berries are eaten raw and also cooked with sugar. Eggs are both fried and boiled.

Flour is generally prepared in the form of bannock, which is also known as baking powder bread, less often as yeast bread. In making bannock two tablespoonfuls of baking powder are added to two cups of flour with a half teaspoonful of salt (hunters usually carry flour already mixed with these ingredients for making bannock). Two tablespoonfuls of sugar are optional for the dough, as is a teaspoonful of cinnamon. One cup of water is added to the dry ingredients, and the mixture stirred with a spoon. The dough is then formed into a single round loaf, which is usually scored, or into individual round rolls, about two inches in diameter, and placed in a frying pan to fry in deep fat until brown on both sides. After both sides have browned, the bread is revolved on the edges until these are brown. Sometimes bannock is baked in a moderate amount of fat in a moderately hot oven, the loaf being basted with melted shortening before closing the oven. At an open fire bannock may be either fried or baked. In baking, the frying pan is set at an angle in front of a hot fire so that the heat is reflected on the dough, which has been spread with melted shortening. An even browning is assured by revolving the loaf as one part browns. Not until baking powder has been exhausted do people trouble to make yeast bread. The bread is baked in an oven or, if a stove lacks a baking compartment, in a straight kettle set on top of the stove and surrounded with hot rocks.

Special foods are not prepared for children. During the day they may ask for bannock and spread it with sugar, cooked berries or, when available, jam or butter. In summer a favorite with children is "ice cream," which they prepare from soap berries placed in a bowl and mashed with a wet spoon. Three parts of sugar are added to one part of berries and the mixture beaten until a thick froth appears. Children up to adolescence are also fond of fixing a mixture of dry milk and sugar added to a little water; the thick cream that results is eaten with a spoon. In winter "ice cream" is sometimes said to be made of powdered milk mixed with snow and sugar.

Throughout the year people eat three main meals a day, one upon arising, another toward the middle of the day, and one in the evening. If the family expects the return of one of its members late at night, tea and other food is often kept warm awaiting the person. In a cabin, meals are eaten from a table; in tents, food is eaten on the ground. Old Man reported that his present wife had to learn to eat from a table. For a long time she refused to do this but ate alone on the floor of the cabin while her husband and his children ate from the table. She still does all her sewing and other work on the floor, setting her sewing machine on an overturned box. A family always eats as a unit. Only on meat packing expeditions was sexual division of eating observed, the men and boys cooking their own food at their own fire, and women at another. Unless they are ill, people eat heartily rather than sparingly but without hurry or noise. The upper part of the body may be slightly bent toward the plate, but a person does not eat hunched over his food. Meals are accompanied by conversation and care is always taken not to waste food. Only inedible scraps are fed to dogs.

1: Honigmann E-6 (1945-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

ried couples, often with children, seldom go home until well after midnight, while unmarried people remain abroad until three or four o'clock in the morning. Older people as well as very young children retire and rise early.

In winter everyone tends to retire early in the long northern night, and people seldom arise before the sun—about nine o'clock in the morning. On the trap line or while traveling earlier rising obtains.

Indians retire fully clothed, except in summer, when moccasins and outer clothes are sometimes removed by the younger people. In winter, an extra sweater and dry moccasins may be donned before going to sleep as additional protection against cold. Following a day of winter travel, people are always careful to hang moccasins, socks and duffel in a warm dry place where these garments will have a chance to dry thoroughly. Despite full awareness of danger from burning, people frequently place damp moccasins too close to a fire causing them to scorch.

People sleep on the back or side and always cover their heads with blankets or eiderdowns. In summer this habit serves as a protection against mosquitoes, while in winter it is imperative for warmth. According to many people's admission, the Indian tends to be a light sleeper. In summer one hears frequent complaints of having been unable to sleep due to the sounds of trucks, crying dogs, or young people "running around."

A person seldom washes more than once a day and then it is upon arising. The hands, arms, face, and neck are generously lathered with soap and rinsed in a washbasin. Bathing is rare, except in summer when boys and girls may go swimming. Nevertheless the people appear clean and emit no offensive body odor. Their clothes and hair, however, smell of wood smoke. Little attention is paid to head lice and nits, most children being afflicted by these pests. Sometimes washing with gasoline is used to get rid of body lice. One very old woman was observed to search her clothes for lice which she would crack with her teeth and eat. A few young people were seen to clean their teeth upon arising, but the extent of this practice seems limited.

Extreme reticence marks the function of elimination. When in a group, a person will never announce that he is going to the toilet but says "I go out," or else simply slips away unobtrusively. Such a departure never meets with comment. People also avoid looking when they see a man or woman going off into the brush alone, and the uncleared toilet area near a camp is generally avoided except for its purpose. Although young men will urinate and defecate in the presence of one or more friends of their own age and sex, urinating is always accomplished by facing away from another person, thereby concealing the genitals. Men urinate in a standing position. Women are much shyer than men and always go a considerable distance into the brush to perform these bodily functions. While adults will never urinate or defecate in the house, an exception is sometimes made for very young children who, in cold weather, are permitted to urinate in a tin can. Children are also not obliged to move as far into the brush to eliminate as adults, and when very young often do so only a few steps from a camp or cabin. People always avoid urinating on a trail; instead they turn to one side, even when wearing snowshoes. Adults were reported to defecate two or three times a day. Twigs or moss are used to clean the anus.

No shame is attached to spitting or clearing the nose. Many men spit constantly and

1: Honignana K-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

159 When I was in Wrangell, a Tlingit Indian asked me to come to his house to eat. They served
● [262] seal meat. I didn't like the smell of the hind quarter they put on my plate. It smelled terribly strong. Anyway I ate it. The next time I saw this man, he asked me to eat with him, but I couldn't touch the meat. Later Bill Strong went to Juneau. There they put me on the radio and I talked with somebody in Seattle. One day I saw a one legged beggar sitting on the ground in Juneau. Everybody who passed threw him some money. So I sat down at a corner too and collected nearly a dollar until Bill Strong came along and found me.

Winter time we began to trap up the Liard River. That was my grandfather's country and I wanted my children to grow up here. For a long time I used to trap in British Columbia but too many kicks started coming. They talked about registering. Billy Barre got fined. He was trapping on the other side of the river and the policeman caught him. I told Billy "If I stay here, I'll get fined too. I'd better go away." Indians are not supposed to have to register. Its Billy's fault. He went after the policeman and signed that registration book. Up on the Liard I never had any trouble, except that my family died off.

In 1930 I lost my wife from heart trouble. She died in her sleep. She had borne about six children and my mother-in-law again looked after them. Gosh, I felt bad. I got drunk and stayed drunk, and even tried to kill myself. Little Louisa cried all night. My old boss, Oscar Anderson, told me: "You're going to be just the same. You're not going to live forever." Then my daughter died. A priest came up the river and he ordered me to open the girl's coffin. "Why do you want me to do that?" I asked him. The priest said he wanted to be certain that the girl had not been put to death as a witch. That made me angry. "Do you think I would kill my own daughter?" I told the priest that I didn't follow such old fashioned thinking. Just before the girl died she had said to me: "Don't try to save me. I'm no good to you. I can't break trail. I can't hunt. I'm only a girl." All together I had nine daughters but just one boy. He died when he was small, perhaps from T. B. A great deal of froth came out of his mouth.

Old Wiley, my wife's sister's husband, came up to the Liard country after me, maybe ten years ago. He liked to move around all the time. When he stayed here I let him use my line across the river. He took it. I let my son-in-law use that line now.

One summer a Sheve woman from Fort Liard met me in Lower Post. She had lost her husband in 1934 and now asked me to marry her. At first I just helped her with clothing and food. That time my children were nearly all getting married. Anna married John Kaus after her sister died. But Anna left John because he didn't treat her well. One time I came back to camp and found my cache nearly empty. I knew that John had taken my stuff and I told the police. The policeman investigated but said he couldn't do anything because John had been hungry. John still has it in for me. He told me: "You reported me many times." That's not true. I reported him only once. Later Anna married Harry Lang. Harry didn't want to trap. He still never has enough grub. One time I told his uncle, Nick Lang, that Harry doesn't want to work. Nick said that I should leave the boy alone and not help him out. He told me I'm spoiling the boy. But I can't let my grandchild starve. Once I told Harry I wouldn't help him anymore. Harry went away and stayed with his uncle, but he came back again inside of a year. His uncle is too hard to get along with. After a couple of years Harry started to bother another woman—Stella Wiley. Stella didn't want him. I told Anna not to say

I: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

She asked me who, and I told her. "Yatse," I said. "He's going to be your uncle," Aunt Mildred told me. "I'm going to marry him." I picked up the fish. "I'm going to give them back," I said. "He talked to me but I didn't understand why he gave them to me." My aunt told me: "He will teach you." 159

One day I got into a fish trap and while watching it I caught many grayling. I took them home and cooked them, guts and all. When Aunt Mildred came back I told her that I had cooked fish. She tried to eat them but gave up and threw the fish to the dogs. I cried for them, but she told me: "They would kill you." The next day we pulled out, leaving the Tastena. We went down the river and then up the Liard to Lower Post. While we were at the post, mama came back on the Hudson's Bay boat. She took me back with her. In August we started down the river again, Old Natucka, Old Stone, and Old Lang. We went forty miles down the Liard, and then Old Lang started up Iron Creek. My baby brother was born up there. I was happy when that baby was born. [226] [262]

Aunt Mildred went back to Watson Lake with my daddy.[3] Whenever I thought of my aunt I started to cry. Mama told me: "She's not your mother." That winter we stayed up at Baldhead Mountain and nearly starved to death. We went down again and met up with Alec, a Sheve Indian from Fort Liard, and a whole bunch of people. We ate moosemeat with those people until after Christmas, when Aunt Mildred came back with my daddy and my daddy's wife. We went down the river past Thirty-Mile. Old Natucka wanted us to go back to stay with him, so Aunt Mildred told mama and we went back. Old Lang didn't want me to go back but they went and took me with them. By this time they were keeping me well. [583]

We came to Old Natucka's place and stayed with him. When spring came, my little brother took sick and they called me a witch. I didn't understand what they meant. Mrs. Piel called me that. Mama believed her and called me that too. They tied me up and hung me by the foot. Oh boy, I wish they tried that on me now! For two nights I hung there and nearly died. I heard an owl tell me: "You'll pull through!" They untied me and tied me up again. I didn't know why they were doing this to me. They asked me many questions, but I didn't understand what they wanted to find out. Once they made me go back almost thirty miles to the old camp. There they asked me: "Did you play that trick here?" "I don't know," I said. Old Madeline was up there and she told me to say: Yes." She warned me: "If you don't tell them that they're going to kill you." I believed her and told them: "Yes." Now we went back to the real camp. My hands were tied and my back was tired from traveling on the trail. They guarded me and I didn't understand why that was necessary. When we came home my little brother died. Later, while I was lying down, my hands tied and a blanket over my head, Mrs. Piel came around. The first thing I saw was my ear being cut. She was going to cut my throat—she tried but gave up. Then we started traveling. Every time we made camp my hands were tied behind my back and a blanket thrown over my face. Finally we came to a small creek, I don't remember the place, where they buried my brother. Mama pulled her scissors out. First Mrs. Piel half cut my ear and then mama finished it. She threw the piece into the fire. I could see it burning. I wished I was big! We got to Lower 159 683

[3] Here Harry is referring to his mother's brother. He was conceived from this couple's incestuous relationship.

Strength and endurance, especially in men, were considered very desirable and of more importance than the stature and shape of body. Tall men were considered good looking, but not equal to short men for strength and endurance. Some tall men were very good walkers but short men were better than tall men as workers and packers. They could carry heavier loads without becoming fatigued. Men who were skilful hunters, good-tempered and of kindly disposition were most desired by women. These qualities were more considered by women than good looks, etc. Some men considered a light smooth skin preferable to fine features. Some would say, "That woman has a beautiful face and fine features but her skin is too rough". It is said that women (or all persons) of the Raven phratry had rougher skins than women or people of the Wolf phratry. This is said to be owing to their descent from Big Raven who like the raven bird had rough skin, especially on the legs. A very wide head or a very flat nose was considered ugly. People having these features were said to resemble slaves. A man would say of a wide-face, flat-nosed person, "That woman is ugly; she resembles a slave".

832 [581] [616]

SUBSISTENCE--VARIETIES AND PREPARATION OF FOOD

The food of the Tahltan consisted of flesh of animals and of fish supplemented by some vegetable food during the summer season. Animal flesh especially was the chief subsistence of the tribe, but fish was also important. In comparison with the Plateau Tribes the use of roots and berries was insignificant. Shell fish taken from salt or fresh water were not eaten. It is said they were fairly abundant in one large lake near the head of Nass River, but in all other parts of the Tahltan country were exceedingly scarce. There were no domestic animals excepting the dog, and no agriculture was practised, except for a period of years the cultivation of tobacco.

262 ● [23] 241 249]

The flesh of the following animals was considered good food; the caribou, moose, buffalo, sheep, goat, bear (of all kinds), lynx, beaver, marmot, porcupine, ground squirrels, and hare or rabbit.

262 136

Tree squirrels and muskrats were eaten occasionally especially if food was scarce but they were not considered very good food. Squirrels did not have enough fat.

262
196

The flesh of the otter, marten, mink, fisher, wolverine, wolf, dog, bush rat, and mouse was not eaten. Only in cases of direct necessity did people eat flesh of these animals, and the last resource was the dog. Of birds, grouse of all kinds, ducks of all kinds, geese, swans and a few other large birds were eaten.

Fresh water fish of all kinds such as salmon, trout, grayling, white fish, pike etc., were eaten.

No reptiles and insects of any kind were eaten. Any person who ate anything unusual or different from the food eaten by all was laughed at and spoken about. /Ed: this section was not completed/.

TRAVEL, TRANSPORTATION AND TRADE

BOATS

[481]
501

Travel was nearly all on foot and this still continues to be the principal method of locomotion. It seems that formerly water travel was not very important to the Tahltan. According to tradition there were no canoes or at least no good canoes long ago. Bark canoes were used in a few places where crossings were made, also on some parts of sluggish streams, and on some lakes. These canoes were made for temporary use only and were seldom used excepting for short periods. They were never used more than a single season and usually the parties who made them threw them away when through with them just as people do rafts. They were roughly made of bark of large trees (varieties uncertain) peeled in the summer and sewed and fastened with wattup,/spruce roots/and light withes. They were so scarce and have been out of use so long that very little is now remembered about them. It is said they were of about the same shape as the skin canoes now used by the Kaska, but were of cruder make than the bark and skin canoes made by tribes to the east and north. Very few large trees having suitable bark for canoe covering are to be found in the Tahltan country excepting within the coast or Cascade Range. Some informants claim that long ago even bark canoes were not made and rafts alone were used. These were of poles lashed together with withes. It seems at least that in ancient days rafts were much more used than bark canoes and in some parts of the Tahltan country they were the only means employed for crossing of rivers and

After childbirth the mother was
fed soft food for several days and given plenty of water 262 846
to drink. Many also drank copiously of medicines of at [278]
least two kinds, viz., a decoction of the sap wood of
spruce, and a decoction of the wood of a black berry.
Mothers were also fed on soups of meat and salmon or
drank the nourishing brews obtained from the boiling of
the staple foods. It is said this had the effect of [227]
improving and increasing the milk supply and was there-
fore beneficial for the baby. When the mother felt 846
strong and well enough she returned to the living lodge.
No payments were made to midwives. Some informants say [759]
that probably very long ago some midwives may have
received pay but they are not sure of this. Some
wealthy men at the birth of their children gave a feast
to the neighbours and distributed skins and leather,
etc., among them as presents. It seems this ceremony
generally took place when a man's wife returned with
her baby from the confinement lodge, but some gave it
soon after the birth was announced.

There was a custom if the infant was a male for the father to repair to the confinement lodge shortly after the afterbirth had come. He took with him a miniature bow and arrows, the latter about five inches long. These he had made as soon as he had learned his child was a boy.

Holding them in the infant's hands, he made

841 nor touch any of their belongings, especially those things connected with hunting. She must not touch any game and must not eat fresh meat of any kind of large game. If she did so the game would become smart or wise and the hunters would be unable to get them. She must not eat any kind of meat from any part of a bear.

841 262 Some informants claim the restrictions on menstruating women as far as food was concerned were just the same as those enjoined on pubescent girls. They must not eat bear meat, nor fresh meat of caribou, moose, sheep, beaver, marmot etc., nor the heads of animals. They could eat feet of caribou and moose but not of bear. Women did not eat the intestines of bears. If they did, their children would be sickly and ugly. After the child-bearing period was over they might eat intestines and feet of bear and also heads of any kind of game, etc. Some claim women menstruating did not eat even the feet of caribou and moose if fresh. In fact they were supposed to eat no fresh meat of any kind nor fresh fish of any kind. They ate only well-dried meat and dried fish. This was because the spirit, life, or soul of the animal was still in the meat when fresh and the fresher the meat the more of the spirit it contained.

[774]

841 Two or three women may occupy the same menstruation lodge, if convenient. When the woman returns home, medicine bags, guns, etc., and children are taken

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

221 nated" in firmly built dwellings and subsisted on fish. Around the turn of the year "young fellows" set out to obtain dried meat from the caches which in some instances might be located 30 or more miles away. For most of the people winter remained a period of limited mobility and relaxed social intercourse. Sometimes, however, fishing failed and then the meat caches were quickly depleted. If fresh fishing sites proved equally unproductive the groups sought to make contact with another band, one that had been more fortunate in finding food. At such times men climbed to high places and scanned the horizons for smoke which in winter would be visible for long distances. Often it must have happened that all the neighbors in a tribal territory found themselves short of food, perhaps due to the cyclic fluctuation of the animal population. In such years, again like the other animals, the human population of the Cassiar also shrank. Thus a balance was kept between the people and the environment's resources. With the lengthening days of spring, the snow crusted and there came another favorable time to pursue game. Now beaver provided an important source of food, the people separating to travel to family-owned beaver creeks. Upon the break-up of the river ice the beaver and muskrat quit their dwellings to travel. That served as a cue for the Indians to build or recover canoes. Then once more they reassembled around a fish lake, where the hot summer was passed renewing friendships. This is a brief summary of the food quest and annual cycle, whose routines remain to be described in greater detail. The focus of the cycle was on food. One informant clearly recognized this when he remarked, "Old timers thought about nothing—just something to eat."

805 In the calendar of the community one sees more specifically the relationship between the people and environment, as well as the note taken of the seasonal changes. The year was divided as follows:

kli?ula-yesa (January)—"dog burning moon." The term refers to the intense cold which caused dogs to get too close to the fire so that they sometimes burned themselves.
ka?oyasesa (February)—"rabbit eating moon" (0). Also tayadasa, "cold tree moon" (X).
atasa (March)—"eagle coming moon" (0). Also called atikasa, "moon when everything [i.e., game] comes to this country" (X).
tatanasa (April)—"snow crusts moon" (0). Also tikasa, "everything here moon" (X).
A reference for the period corresponding to May could not be obtained.
ayesesa (June)—"egg moon."
akatsunzisa (July)—"game moults moon."
atosanasa (August)—"fat game moon" (0) or etdigasa, "everything ready, everything fat moon" (X).
atoditelisa (September)—"leaves color moon."
?ustelisa (October)—"female ground hog moon."
natinitsilsa (November)—"little finger moon." So called because "its soft, everything is cool and yet not too cold."
tinitcosa (December)—"Christmas (?) moon."

222 824 262 The Indians secured food through gathering, trapping, hunting, and fishing. Girls and women did the principal collecting, although men also sought vegetable products in the course of walking through a favorable area while hunting. Berries were the main items sought by collectors and included, in approximate order of frequency, the soap berry, high- and low-bush cranberry, salmon berry, raspberry, strawberry, currant, and

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

blueberry. Other vegetable products taken from the land included fern roots in spring; lily bulbs; mushrooms, frequently stolen from a squirrel's cache; muskeg apples, that grew up in the mountains and were described as tasting somewhat like turnips; wild onions, of which only the greens were eaten; rose petals, made into a beverage by boiling; and wild rhubarb. Both sexes chewed gum taken from a "half dead" spruce tree, a choice advised by the fact that such gum would not stick to the teeth. Jackpine and spruce fibers were also eaten but mud, birch fiber, willow buds, wild rice, and wild peas held no place in the diet. Birch sap, obtained by tapping the birch in spring, ranked as a minor delicacy but people ignored poplar sap. Children kept the camp supplied with water, securing it from the river or in the form of snow. Warmed moose milk was sometimes drunk.

Flesh food could be secured with the least expenditure of energy by setting traps, including snares, deadfalls, nets, and, perhaps, pitfalls. For bear the Indian located a snare made of braided babiche (as many as eight strands of semi-tanned skin line might be used) near a berry patch, while for moose and caribou he placed similar snares between trees and across the runways which those animals had made in the course of visiting drinking places and salt licks. Fences were sometimes extended from either side of a moose or caribou snare. At other times trappers thrust two forked poles into the ground and across them suspended a toggle pole twelve feet long and three inches in diameter. From the toggle hung a caribou snare while on either side a fence directed the animal into the trap. Men always set moose and caribou snares. "Even if a woman knew how to make a caribou snare she could not make it good enough." For lynx a semicircle of poles with a center opening for the snare was anchored in the ground. A single strand of babiche had sufficient strength to hold this animal. Such snares might be erected by women. In mountain gulches through which ran sheep trails men erected free toggle snares for sheep. Often the poles used in this work had to be packed long distances above timberline. Up to six strands of babiche were twisted together to make a snare line strong enough for that animal. For beaver, men (and also women) set snares of three-strand twisted babiche near a dam.

Ground hog snares featured a rock toggle and required two-strand twisted babiche. The family provided itself with a number of six- or seven-foot long forked poles in the fall and packed these above the timberline. The trapper firmly planted one such pole for each snare in a rock cairn near a ground hog den. On either side of the pole ran a small fence about a foot high. After forming the snare loop between these fences, the snare line was bent and knotted around a small trigger stick before continuing through the fork of the pole. Halfway below the fork the line was weighted with a 20-pound rock. The trigger stick was fitted under a convenient knob or protuberance on the upright pole, the toggle's weight serving to keep it fixed until an animal entered the snare and dislodged the stick, whereupon the rock fell to the ground. The weight of the falling toggle lifted the animal off the earth. In timbered areas lifting-pole snares like those frequently used for rabbits were also set for ground hog. In fact, the rock toggle appears to represent an adaptation of the lifting-pole principle to treeless country. Men, boys, and women built ground hog snares.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

226 ping all contributed to the accumulation of fish throughout the year. Techniques varied with the season, however. Thus only during periods of open water could the foot-long birch or poplar pole be used to club fish as they swam in shallow water. Spearing with single and double tines was limited to the same period.[11] Tines were cut from beaver and caribou bone and hafted to shafts with sinew line. A detachable point joined to its shaft with 14 feet of tanned skin line constituted a harpoon. While seine and dip nets as well as the net-like fish drag are all reported to have been lacking, the gill net ("rock sunk net") found extensive employment in summer and winter. Willow-bark line furnished material for the women who, using a net shuttle and measuring stick, did the netting. Small- and large-mesh nets were prepared, the latter for beaver. Large-mesh beaver nets utilized fine babiche line rather than willow bark. The measuring stick also altered its size for these various types of nets, reaching a maximum length of a foot and a width of four inches. The rock sinkers for fish nets are said to have been heavier in summer than in winter, when the net was set under the ice. Winter netting required an ice chisel, frequently a sharpened length of caribou horn, as well as an ice scoop (literally "ice spoon") made of birch. Both sexes set fish nets. Fish weirs caught mainly whitefish and grayling. The funnel-like entry was made by stitching spruce brush onto a willow-pole framework about eight feet long. Willow-bark or spruce-root line provided stitching material. The funnel led into a square trap, from which a fence extended to both banks of the stream. Spruce brush tied to willow poles with spruce-root line provided fence material. Occasionally spawning fish were caught with a spruce-root snare set at the end of a seven-foot willow pole. Pike swimming close to shore could be shot with arrows containing detachable flint points. Torch fishing did not occur except to the extent that, when fish ran in lakes, people sometimes set big blazes on shore. The light showed up the fish.

●262 The hunting and fishing techniques just described provided a variety of foodstuffs. To review, people ate caribou, moose, black and brown bear, sheep, goats (more rarely), beaver, muskrat, lynx, ground hog, gopher, and marten, the latter being described as resembling rabbit in taste. Porcupine often provided a mainstay in winter, people refraining from killing this animal in summer in order to insure a supply for a period when it might be sorely needed. Rabbit, as might be expected, provided a very common item of diet in all seasons. Children hunted squirrels and prepared them over small fires. Among birds the owl, goose, and duck, while not overly abundant, were relished. Ptarmigan appeared frequently in late winter while the eagle, crane, swan, loon, spruce hen, and willow grouse were welcome additions to diet. Fish may have been somewhat more important in winter than in summer for in the latter season "the hunter could approach closer to game with his bow and arrow." Fish intestines did not go neglected as food. Berries were the chief vegetable item. The Indians never ate grizzly bear, the meat being described as "too strong." The fat of the grizzly, however, rendered a much appreciated grease. Fox, dog, otter, mink, and wolverine were likewise normally rejected.[12] Nobody thought of eating wolf, frogs, or toads. The unpleasant taste of the

[11] The single tine was called tsai, the double tine, xoe; they correspond roughly to lances (a) and (c) in Osgood, *Ingalik Material Culture* (1940), 197–198.

[12] See below, p. 108.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

fish-eating ducks made them unpopular for food and the raven was deemed to be inedible. Porcupine and bear brains exercised a debilitating effect on the body and hence were not used in preparing food. In periods of severe hunger the poorer tasting foods and, perhaps, even the magically dangerous animals like mink and otter would be consumed. Under the stress of starvation selectivity broke down to a point where moosehide might be eaten. Although strong repugnance governed the consumption of human flesh,[13] unproductive periods accompanied by severe hunger sometimes led to cannibalism. Tales of confirmed cannibals occur in oral tradition. There is the story of a man widely feared for his perverted appetite, which led him to regard human beings as game. He ate anyone he came across, including his wife and several children. Three sons, however, he spared because they could work for him. Indeed, they specialized in the task of killing men for their cannibal father after the latter grew too old to hunt. Approaching a camp this man would say, "You can kill birds for me now." Then, while the boys went off he started water boiling in readiness for the meat that they would bring back. The tale ends with the old cannibal and his sons meeting death at the hands of an intended victim who possessed exceptionally strong supernatural power.

Edible foods were both prepared for immediate consumption and preserved to be eaten at a later time. Boiling constituted the primary technique of cooking. Some meats, like lynx, were double boiled, the first water being discarded. After the meat had been cooked a "soup" was customarily made, onion greens or animal blood being added to the stock. "Soup took the place of tea in the old days. When people had finished with the meat they always drank the water in which the meat had been cooked." Several methods of boiling were known. Water placed in a basket tightly woven from split spruce roots could be brought to a boil with the aid of hot stones picked from ashes with spruce brush and blown free of dirt. The meat, cut in small pieces, was dropped into the boiling liquid. These vessels sometimes rested on the ground but were also supported a foot or so above the earth on a circle of wooden pegs. Another way of bringing water to boil is reminiscent of the Plains Indians. A pit was dug in the soil and lined with semi-tanned skin or, less commonly, with grass. Hot stones constituted the source of heat and keeping the top of the pit covered with spruce bark helped to retain the steam. Caribou and moose stomachs supplied another variety of container in which food could be cooked. The organ was first carefully warmed in front of the blaze to make it dry and hard. Later it might be suspended over the fire to cook the contents. Vegetables boiled included lily bulbs, muskeg apples, and fern roots, the latter only after being stripped of their outer bark. Dried wild rose petals were "powdered" before cooking. Mashing berries during cooking was common. People sometimes broiled meat by suspending it from a broiling stick or from a bone hook that itself hung from a piece of babiche line. Pieces of fat exposed near the heat of fire provided grease, the drippings being caught in bark containers. "Sometimes, when bear fat was rendered alongside a fire, some of the melted grease was taken and mixed with a little snow. It started to foam up just like ice cream." In summer moose horn could be warmed close to the fire and the "velvet" then scraped off and eaten. Only under exceptional circumstances did the Indians eat raw meat or fat.

[13] See below, p. 91.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Pease River

ground and near that animal's trails. Upon completing the structure the hunters ascended the mountain and drove the sheep toward the corral. Human surrounds aided in moose hunting, a circle of men seeking to drive the animal toward a place where snares had been constructed. Great nets, 15 to 20 feet long and constructed of babiche, were planted to catch beaver, a task for summer nights when the beaver swam freely and one that invited family cooperation. Once caught in a net, the animal was clubbed to death. In winter beaver nets were sometimes suspended under the ice. Moose and caribou hunting sometimes involved semicircular tracking and in autumn a hunter called moose with a birch-bark horn or by rubbing a moose scapula against a tree. Because "moose are smart animals and run away at the smallest sound," tracking them in summer demanded that a hunter remove his moccasins. People did not hunt caribou in bare feet. Often in late winter men depended on deep and crusted snow to help them secure game. The snow impeded the travel of moose and caribou so that the lighter hunter who was also equipped with snowshoes could readily run them down.

A man's hunting equipment included the bow, arrows, spear, gaff stick, and club. Birch yielded the commonest bow wood but willow also found employment for boys. The middle of the bowstock was backed with caribou sinew, the object being to insure straight shooting. Twisted sinew or babiche furnished a bowstring. Willow and birch wood furnished material for arrows, while obsidian, flint, bone, and horn provided points. Barbed points appear to have been restricted to the latter two materials. Untipped arrows, the wood of which was sometimes sharpened, were suited for bringing down game birds. Vanes of two or three feathers made use of owl or "any other" kind of feather. Men kept their arrows in tanned skin quivers that were carried under the left shoulder and toward the front of the body. This left the weapons in easy access of the hunter's right hand. Spears, sometimes no more complex than a painted or unpainted sharpened pole, served to kill bear and beaver. Lance points of bone and caribou horn were also employed. No clear picture could be obtained of the dart thrower or "stick gun," which was frequently mentioned as having been used in the aboriginal community. The weapon apparently consisted of a piece of birchwood fitted with a hole in which was inserted a two-foot dart provided with a stone point. After aiming the dart the hunter smartly rapped the base of the dart with a stick, thereby sending the missile toward its target. Mention of this weapon also occurred in a folktale collected from an Upper Liard informant who, however, denied that the weapon had been used in his territory.[18] Gaff hooks were inserted into a beaver lodge to seize one of those animals and draw him out to where he could be clubbed to death.

Part of every successful hunter's reward came when he proudly returned to camp packing a few token pieces of meat. On the following morning other men went to the scene of the kill and selected whatever portions of the animal they pleased.

In terms of preference fish occupied an inferior dietary position compared to meat. Economically, they appear to have been of far greater importance. Trout, whitefish, sucker, and jackfish were speared, netted, trapped, and angled. From the rib bones of

[18] For the tale see Honigmann, *Cultural Dynamics of Sex* (1947), 46; or, Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 293.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River

the beaver men shaped double-tined points for fish spears. The Indians also relied on weirs, while gill nets were set from canoes in summer and under the ice in winter. In the latter season, before a net could be set the ice had to be broken with an ice chisel that was constructed from caribou horn. Dip nets could not be recalled. Angling occurred in summer and winter. Hooks consisted of two splinters of beaver bone crossed and lashed in the form of an x. Fish poisons do not appear to have been known.

In addition to the foods already mentioned the Dease River people readily ate brown bear, porcupine, mountain goat, rabbit, ground hog, squirrel, and gopher. Whether nutritionally important or not, the body louse, foetal animals, moose milk, and sheep milk were also consumed. The eyes of the moose and caribou provided delicacies especially reserved for children. Geese, ducks, loons, swans, ptarmigans, spruce hens, and willow grouse found a welcome part in the diet. Fish eggs did not remain neglected. Animals rarely eaten or reserved for periods of scarcity included the grizzly bear, owl, lynx, and whiskey jack. In the category of never eaten animals occurred the fox, muskrat (perhaps the pack rat is indicated?), fisher, otter, mink, wolverine, wolf, dog, frog, eagle, hawk, crow, and woodpecker. Vomiting is said to have followed any attempt to eat otter, mink, wolverine, or wolf. Mud and lily bulbs remained outside of the diet. Although consumption of human flesh rested under strong prohibition, in periods of great hunger cannibalism admittedly took place. An apprehended eater of human flesh might be isolated from his community for as long as two years. Beliefs that cannibalism led to illness or produced a craving for human flesh were denied. No evidence of ceremonial cannibalism could be obtained.

A large proportion of meat as well as eggs were boiled with the aid of hot stones, in containers of either birch bark or woven spruce root. Caribou and moose stomachs occasionally served as cooking vessels, being hung to one side of the fire. Pit cooking could not be recalled. The water in which meat had been boiled provided a soup, to which onion greens or blood might be added. People prepared animal heads, intestines, and fish on a broiling stick but did not roast food in hot ashes. Rabbits and fowl on isolated occasions might be eaten raw, as when long rain had soaked all available wood thus making it impossible to kindle fire. An informant offered two recipes for "ice cream." The first variety consisted of a mixture of grease, cranberries, and snow. In the second process cranberries or dry soap berries were added to bear or beaver grease in a kettle and the whole mixed together. Snow did not enter the compound but today sugar makes a necessary additional ingredient.

Women preserved a variety of meats, fish, and berries through sun drying. Pemmican, prepared from stone-pounded meat with grease and berries added, was stored in viscera and birch-bark baskets. Caches held the preserved food. A simple type of cache consisted of a 12-foot pole lashed onto a tree with willow-bark line. After wrapping the meat in hide or a sheet of bark, it was suspended about three-quarters of the way up the pole. A ground cache consisted of a box-like structure of poles surrounded with rocks and covered with poles weighed down by additional stones. Men also constructed four-pole shelter caches and elevated them up to 12 feet above the ground, the poles being lashed together with babiche. A double layer of poles, one running at right angles

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River
Tselona

to the other, crowned such a structure. Families also utilized simpler platform caches, the food on these being covered with brush or bark held in place with heavy logs.

Women cooked on occasions when the family ate as a unit. Food was served on bark dishes or in wooden bowls. Spoons of sheep or caribou horn facilitated eating. People took meals twice a day, morning and night, both sexes as well as children eating together. An informant denied gormandizing, remarking that the people knew very well when to cease eating.

Tselona. The fat game in the high country attracted the families in autumn. With the onset of winter the bands descended to a fish lake, from which the men went out to fetch meat from caches, hauling back the food on skin toboggans. Often only two families spent the winter together at a fishing site—two brothers and their wives and children or about ten people in all. Summer sent the hunters to set snares for moose and goats. All summer the men "kept on the move," following game. The usual vegetable foods were gathered by women, including blueberries, low bush cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, currants, and soap berries. The latter berries were never mixed with grease because the berries would "smell" the grease and "settle down again, not make soap." In other words, they would not froth as they did when mashed with water.[14] People ate lily bulbs raw as well as cooked. Bark vessels served to catch birch and poplar sap for drinking. Both sexes chewed spruce gum but geophagy remained unpracticed. Spruce, birch, and jackpine fibers, peeled with a knife, were eaten raw, as was wild rhubarb which, however, people took pains to "skin." Wild onions were cooked with meat. The informant denied any use of willow buds and wild rice for food, the latter being unrecognized in this area. Two varieties of muskeg tea were sought by gatherers, the stems and leaves of both types being boiled. The species could be identified only as tas?luse and dimasket.

Our informant confidently stated that moose had always populated the country of the Tselona but denied the presence of elk, wood buffalo, and mountain sheep. Moose were snared and also hunted with the bow, the hunter relying on semicircular tracking to approach within close range of his prey. In season the moose might be called with a dried moose scapula. No custom of removing moccasins while tracking game could be recalled. Sometimes a line of men moving forward in concerted action drove a moose toward a series of snares. Caribou were also caught in snares, and skin decoys further assisted in the hunting of that animal. A hunter who wanted to kill a bear when it was summer, sought to surprise the animal in a berry patch, shooting it first with an arrow and then finishing it off with a lance bearing a caribou-horn point. In winter men obtained bears by shooting them while in a den or by thrusting lances into the lair. Sometimes a smoke fire served to drive the animal out of its winter dwelling. Lances also aided in killing beaver in the spring. A porcupine could easily be clubbed to death but in winter had first to be smoked out of its house. No taboo forbade the clubbing of any animal. Following the introduction of dogs, people employed them to track game. Other

[14] Yet Pike reports the coastal tribes to pound soap berries "till a thick froth, much resembling soap bubbles, gathers. . . . this froth, with a judicious mixture of salmon oil—or, better still, seal oil—they consider one of the things worth living for." Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 35-36.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Tsalona
Frances Lake

animals eaten included the muskrat, lynx, rabbit, ground hog, marten, and body louse. Ground hog, the informant pointed out, furnished a far more important source of food in the aboriginal period than did the rabbit. Women preserved a large number of ground hog from the fall for winter consumption. The fox and weasel were trapped for fur alone, while the skunk remained severely left alone. Birds caught for food included the owl, goose, duck, grouse, ptarmigan, swan, crane, and spruce hen. The eagle, crow, hawk, and loon played no role in the diet. Any successful hunter of large game, after butchering his prize, returned to camp and announced his good fortune, thus stimulating men and women to set out to secure a share of the meat. In general, butchering involved first the removal of an animal's skin, severing the limbs, and removing the viscera. The carcass could then be divided further.

Techniques of fishing included spearing with bone-pointed spears (the bone coming from the ankle of a moose), angling with bone points bearing moose-meat bait, and trapping with a fish weir. In winter weirs could be set in fast creeks that never froze; there were undoubtedly a number of such creeks on the Rocky Mountain slopes in the Tselona country. People did not fish with the aid of torches nor did they employ snares. Fish eaten included the grayling, sucker, ling (loche), whitefish, and trout. Salmon did not extend into this region.

Only when fire could not be provided did the Indians venture to consume raw meat. Hot-stone boiling in bark vessels served as the standard procedure for preparing flesh food. Pit cooking as well as stomach boiling were both denied. Blood went into the preparation of soup as did additional rendered grease. Although occasionally fixed by boiling, foetal animals were generally broiled, always in their entirety without the viscera being removed. A hunter did not neglect the opportunity to drink raw milk when he had slain an animal with full mammary glands.

As elsewhere in the northern forest the group recognized late September and October as a period suitable for meat drying. Now smudge fires could be neglecting without risking the danger of blow flies spoiling the food. For preservation women cut the meat of large game animals into long thin slices but ground hogs, minus the viscera, were dried in their entirety. Berries dried as they lay spread on a flat surface and, like other dehydrated foods, might be freshened again by soaking them in water. Skin bags contained pemmican, made of chopped meat and grease and without berries. The informant denied that viscera had ever been stuffed.

An entire family ate together, taking food from birch bark dishes. (Spruce bark was avoided because it imparted a pitchy taste to the food.) Periods of starvation visited the community not infrequently and sometimes resulted from caches ransacked by grizzly bears or other animal marauders. Only by quickly locating a well-stocked source of fish could famine be avoided. Cannibalism sometimes made an appearance in periods of starvation. The sight of much food promoted the tendency to overeat, especially following a period of limited rations. At such a time friends advised a hungry man to resume eating with caution, first offering him moose blood and pointing out that death might ensue if he ate meat straight off.

Frances Lake Kaska. No data on the food quest were sought from Frances Lake in-

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Frances Lake
Upper Liard

formants, who were young men with records of considerable time spent in the Liard Valley. It is likely that the patterns already presented also largely obtained in the Frances Lake area.[17]

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION

Upper Liard Kaska. Foodgetting among the Indians of the taiga depended thoroughly upon mobility. Although a little travel occurred for other purposes, two main patterns of mobility may be distinguished. First, groups of people moved with their belongings to various parts of the tribal territory in search of new food resources to exploit. Such travel took place, for example, in the fall when the population moved to the mountains and again in early winter when they journeyed down to fish lakes. Second, there took place a great deal of "short term" travel, required of men pursuing game or of women visiting fishnets and berry patches. The Indians remained mobile in every season but the techniques of travel differed to a considerable extent between winter and summer. With snow on the ground and bodies of water covered with ice the toboggan and snowshoe provided the basic travel aids while in the season of open water travelers relied on the canoe, paddle, and raft.

Animal skins as well as wood were utilized for toboggans. Beaver skins prepared with the hair served well for traction, the smoothness of the pelt aiding their easy passage over the snow. Three such skins sewn together constituted a good sized vehicle. A number of skins from the hind legs of moose or caribou might also be sewn together with sinew to make a toboggan six feet long and two feet wide. To hold goods securely the rear portions of skin toboggans were stitched "like a baby bag." Prepared by a woman, a skin vehicle would last a winter or even two if stored in a dry place when the snow began to melt. A man manufactured undecorated wooden toboggans, tamarack being the preferred material. After splitting the green wood with a wedge he planed the boards with his stone knife. Wood from the exterior section of the tree bent most readily, the bending process being accomplished by moistening the lumber with warm water and then forcing the board back "against a pole."[18] The running boards were sewn to cross

[17] Similar patterns are reported for the Pelly River people by Field, who says, for example, that the Pelly River people moved into "a good game country about the end of August when all game is fat, to put up a cache of dry meat for the winter months." In fall women busied themselves drying groundhog and gopher. The Indians of the Ross and Pelly valleys subsisted primarily on meat and fish. Men "used bows and arrows to hunt with, spears, snares, deadfalls also. They would make long fences when the caribou and sheep came below timberline, sometimes packing poles to make their fences up with on top of the mountains. They would leave spaces big enough for a caribou or sheep to go through in their fences and get snared in them. Whenever a herd was sighted they would try to surround them and drive them through their fences." Cordage for snares came from twisted "sinew or caribou skin raw" and the line was anchored to a movable pole toggle. "Beaver the Indian kills every way, with nets in winter, spears and shoots them . . . and kills them with a club." The gaff stick also served in hunting beaver. (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1913].) An Upper Liard informant (0) reported with some distaste that the Ross River Indians deliberately cultivated mold in meat that was later cooked. Such meat proved too strong for the taste of the Liard River people.

[18] The method no doubt resembled that executed by a Frances Lake Indian in 1945. See Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 60, 73–74; also Pl. 6, A and B.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1946) 1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

789
784
825

to have been recognized by the Indians, who regarded such variation as magically induced. The killing of wolves and crows was also avoided in deference to the members of the moieties named after those animals.

Contemporary informants still categorize the mink, otter, and wolf as "devil's helpers." Also allied with Gusliina are the snake, toad,[24] elephant (nu?uti), shark, wolverine, flying squirrel, and grizzly bear.[25] Some of the items in this list were undoubtedly known only by hear-say, if they were known at all in aboriginal times. Of the wolverine it was said that he stole on behalf of the devil.[26] The flying squirrel sought to remove people from this world but to kill the animal promised illness and its meat was never eaten. The grizzly occupied himself with trying to kill men for the devil and manifested extraordinary sensitivity to ridicule. When slighted he might harbor resentment for several years until finally taking his revenge by killing the person who had laughed at him.[27] Magical power of another quality was ascribed to the beaver, moose, and caribou. Beaver bones had always to be discarded in the fire, while the bones of the other two species were thrown far away from camp in an effort to attract fresh game to the locale. People burned the hair scraped from a moose hide. If a woman stepped on this material her husband would become powerless to kill moose, while if a dog ate moose meat then the owner would never again be able to track the moose successfully. To club wounded caribou caused illness. It was very foolish to make pets of large game animals. Raising a young moose, beaver, or bear in captivity would promote the deaths of many poeple. The children of the captor would die off as the species of animal multiplied, the deaths of one balancing increase of the other.

Young men took water, grease, and bone marrow in measured quantities both in order to preserve their health and to enhance their hunting ability. Too much water interfered with digestion and hence undermined a man's capacity for sustained effort. Grease was "too heavy" for a youth. Leg tendons also remained taboo for young men; to eat them invited the danger of leg cramps at a time when unhampered movement was essential. The hind quarters of an animal were best avoided in favor of the forward portions that contained "strength." Boys ate lightly and not until a man's marriage had produced four or five children should he begin to eat as much as he cared to of whatever he liked. Such avoidances did not apply to girls, because women were not hunters and their work was not as exhausting as men's.

262

789
784

The relationship entered into between a man and his animal sponsor did not result in a complete avoidance of that animal for food in those cases where the species was

[24] "The slime exuding from a frog's skin was thought to be very poisonous and fatal to smaller creatures." Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 458.

[25] Old World folklore also accounts for the evil dispositions of certain animals by classifying them as creatures of the devil. Thompson, *Folktale* (1946), 236.

[26] "The wolverine . . . was also held in great respect." Christianized Tlingit regarded him "next to the devil for badness." Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 456.

[27] Special respect for the grizzly has been reported for the Tlingit. Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 455.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Tselona
Frances Lake

and food but they do not seem to have possessed the same dangerous potency as the mink, for example. The informant denied any general avoidance of the otter. Rather some people paid more regard to him than others. Clarification of this statement could not be secured. Perhaps a man who enjoyed otter power felt less fear for that animal. Following their introduction in numbers, dogs came to eat the meat of any animal but not the leg tendons or intestines of the moose. Avoidance of these foods preserved the dog's endurance.

A young man observed a number of food avoidances designed to develop capacities for hunting. He drank water lightly, since many animals disliked water. Avoidance of the beverage magically helped a man to obtain greater power over game. He also ate sparingly of leg tendons, moose intestines, and moose brains lest his quickness and resistance to fatigue become impaired. The successful tracking of large game depended on speed. No grease taboos were known. Except during menstruation when a woman avoided fresh meat, women ate the same foods eaten by men. Avoidances designed to develop hunting power did not apply to women. As the informant explained, "Game don't want him, that woman." Dream animals played no part in the diet, not being eaten in whole or part. Some shamans never ate porcupine or beaver and others rejected the head of moose. These observances would seem to be auxiliary to the taboo on the meat of the animal sponsor or may represent a partial contradiction of that statement. Cohabitation taboos prior to hunting were denied.

Frances Lake Kaska. Attitudes toward the otter are described by Pike.[41]

> A curious superstition prevails that if you kill an otter it is capable of causing much trouble by coming to life again in your stomach. Only three winters ago a Frances Lake woman lay at death's door with this malady, but she was saved by the timely arrival of the only medicine man left in the tribe. He seems to have diagnosed the case correctly at once, and holding a sheep's horn spoon to the patient's mouth, he proceeded to repeat a long incantation suitable to the occasion. As soon as he had finished, to the great joy of all the relatives who had gathered to see the death, three little otters dropped out into the spoon. The old lady recovered rapidly, and afterwards confessed to having stolen and eaten an otter that she had found in somebody else's beaver trap during a long period of starvation in the early summer.

Hunting rites included depositing an unidentified "medicine" on a moose track, either to attract the animal back to that spot or to make him more vulnerable to the hunter's arrow. After spreading other substances around a beaver house the hunter would sit down to await the appearance of the game. Scapulimancy could not be recalled. The wearing of animal figurines cut from bone insured success in hunting.

Sucking provided the commonest means of curing but other conceptions of illness coexisted with the notion of intrusion that sucking suggests. A young man carefully

[41] Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 145. Field reports that "The Pellys and Little Salmons believe that very near all sickness comes from the otter and mink and if anybody kills one, they or some of their near relatives will get sick and die. If any should happen to kill an otter or mink and skin it, he generally will use some old knife and throw the knife away when he is finished. He believes by doing this he guards against getting sick as the sickness is in the knife. Also if you touch or kill a frog your limbs will lose their strength, and you will get poor. Your flesh will gradually waste away till you die." Field, *Unpublished manuscript* (1913), 6.